

James H. Lane Ranch, Barn
One mile south of Richfield and Highway 26
Richfield
Lincoln County
Idaho

HABS
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

**Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107**

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
JAMES H. LANE RANCH, BARN

HABS No. ID-113-A

Location:

The farmstead and barn are located 1 mile south of Richfield and Highway 26; approximately 35 miles northeast of Shoshone, Lincoln County's seat, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/732000/4769260

Significance:

The Riverwood Ranch's barn is significant under Criterion A, because of its associations with broad patterns of south-central Idaho agricultural history and settlement. It is also significant under Criterion C. The barn represents the use of basalt as a building material in south-central Idaho during the early twentieth century.

Description:

The James Lane property lies on the Snake River plain in the middle of an ancient basalt flow. The barn is located near the north banks of the Little Wood River, one mile directly south of the small town of Richfield. The elevation of the site is approximately 4300 feet. The barn's gable ends lie east and west, with the pointed hay hood on the west facade. The east-west orientation provides a natural air flow from the area's wind pattern, so no other ventilation system is necessary. A wide central aisle running the entire length of the barn provides a passageway for the air flow. The barn is located about 20 yards south of the original home site. Newer outbuildings and corrals lie directly in front of the west facade. An original outbuilding (possibly a coop or hog shed) lies directly north of the barn's north facade, across an empty ditch. A pump house is still extant thirty yards from the east facade.

Native basalt rock was used to build the side walls of the barn. There were many masons in the region well experienced in building with basalt, including other barns. The milled lumber in the roof and loft area most likely was shipped in on the railroad, or ordered from local lumber mills. Early barn plans could also be found at local lumber stores, in agricultural literature, and sometimes in local newspaper advertisements. Portland cement was available in southern Idaho as early as 1890, and was used as mortar between the rocks and for poured sills and lintels for the doors and lintels for the windows. The concrete was hand-mixed and poured into wooden forms, as is evidenced by the marks on the sides of the concrete entryway. Small rocks, gravel and even burlap and cloth were used as infill and binding agents in the concrete. In this particular case, the mortar was not colored to match the rocks. White-painted beading outlines each stones' shape. Molded concrete also covered the rock jambs on each double-doored entry in the first story facades.

JAMES H. LANE RANCH, BARN
HABS NO. ID-113-A (Page 2)

In some instances, the mason for this barn fitted stones around existing rock outcroppings, providing extra stability to the side walls. Though basalt is extremely difficult to dress, the near-regular coursing and rock sills indicate that some shaping work occurred during barn construction. Dressed basalt stones were also specially laid at the corners to produce a rough quoin effect. Similar lava rock quoins frame the sides of the window openings. Iron rebar or rods run through the roof rafters on the top half-story to the first story; they tied the roof truss assembly loft floor joists to the rock side walls. When portions of the loft were removed in the 1980s, the side walls started to separate from the corner quoins.

The overall dimensions of the barn are approximately 37'-0" x 87'-0". It has a flared gambrel roof with enclosed eaves. Shiplap siding covers the wood-frame walls in the eave and above the one and one-half story stone walls. A swinging double door was originally located below the pointed hay hood on the west facade. The wood-frame portion and top one-half story of stone above the entryway of the west facade caved in and fell down in the 1980s. Two windows, originally two-over-two double-hung sash, flank each side of the double doors. A large concrete lintel headed the double sliding doors; it is now nearly cracked in half. All first-story windows are inset halfway into the rock walls and framed with plain milled wood. A molded concrete lintel and lava rock sill covered with mortar support the window frames. Several window lintels are also cracked.

The north facade contains eight casement windows, and the south facade contains nine windows. The windows are framed in plain milled wood and consist of two-over-two lights. Concrete lintels frame the tops of each window. On the north facade, a small 1/2 story door composed of wood planks is located in the top half-story. It leads into the loft area.

The east gable facade is similar to the west facade, but contains only a double-hung sash window in the eave. The panes and their framing are no longer extant, so the original light pattern is indistinguishable. A single door, similar to one that was in the collapsed west upper wall, is located at the loft level. Two double-hung sash windows (the panes are missing here, also) flank the entry wall. The door and concrete side trim are missing.

The interior has been greatly altered. Two-thirds of the loft floor and supporting joists were cut out of the building in the 1980s, taking away cross ties for the walls. Some of the mangers and pens have been torn out or rebuilt, as recently as the 1980s. There are indications that the milk room was located in the northwest corner of the barn--a requirement after 1916 pure milk standards were passed. Stalls with mangers located directly below the windows line the rest of the area. Holes in the loft are located directly above the windows, so hay could be forked down easily into the mangers. Some enclosures, nails, and wire indicate that the east end of the building may have at one time been used for horses or other stock animals. The wood boards are chewed, indicating that horses were penned there at one time. There is some indication of concrete flooring at the east entryway, but it does not seem to cover the entire floor. Most of the floor originally may have been dirt and rock. Sliding double doors presently cover the central aisle's entryways; it is not known if the sliding mechanism was part of the original construction. Electric wiring is still extant throughout, but appears to be fairly recent. No plumbing exists within the barn, but pumps are located near the outside corrals and feeding troughs.

**JAMES H. LANE RANCH, BARN
HABS NO. ID-113-A (Page 3)**

The loft area consists of basalt side walls on the north and south facades extending approximately eight feet above the wood loft floor. The east and west facades consist of balloon framing in the upper loft area. The roof framing consists of braced rafters used in a truss assembly system. The rafters are paired in sets and braced in two places--between the upper and lower rafters and at the juncture of the stone loft wall and roof. Consequently, no posts are located in the loft floor area, and there are no tie beams or ridge posts. The loft floor is composed of wood tongue-and-groove boards. Half of the floor and supporting joists on the west end were removed in the 1980s. A hay pulley and cable run east and west the entire length of the roof underneath the tie beams. Hay was loaded into the loft through the original side-hinged, double hay doors in the second story of the west facade. It is not known whether a Jackson fork or slings were used, though both were common in southern Idaho.

The structure is in extremely poor condition, because of the partial removal of the loft floor and tie beams. Several walls have deteriorated and fallen inward; others are pulling apart at the corners. The barn's integrity has been compromised by this structural deterioration.

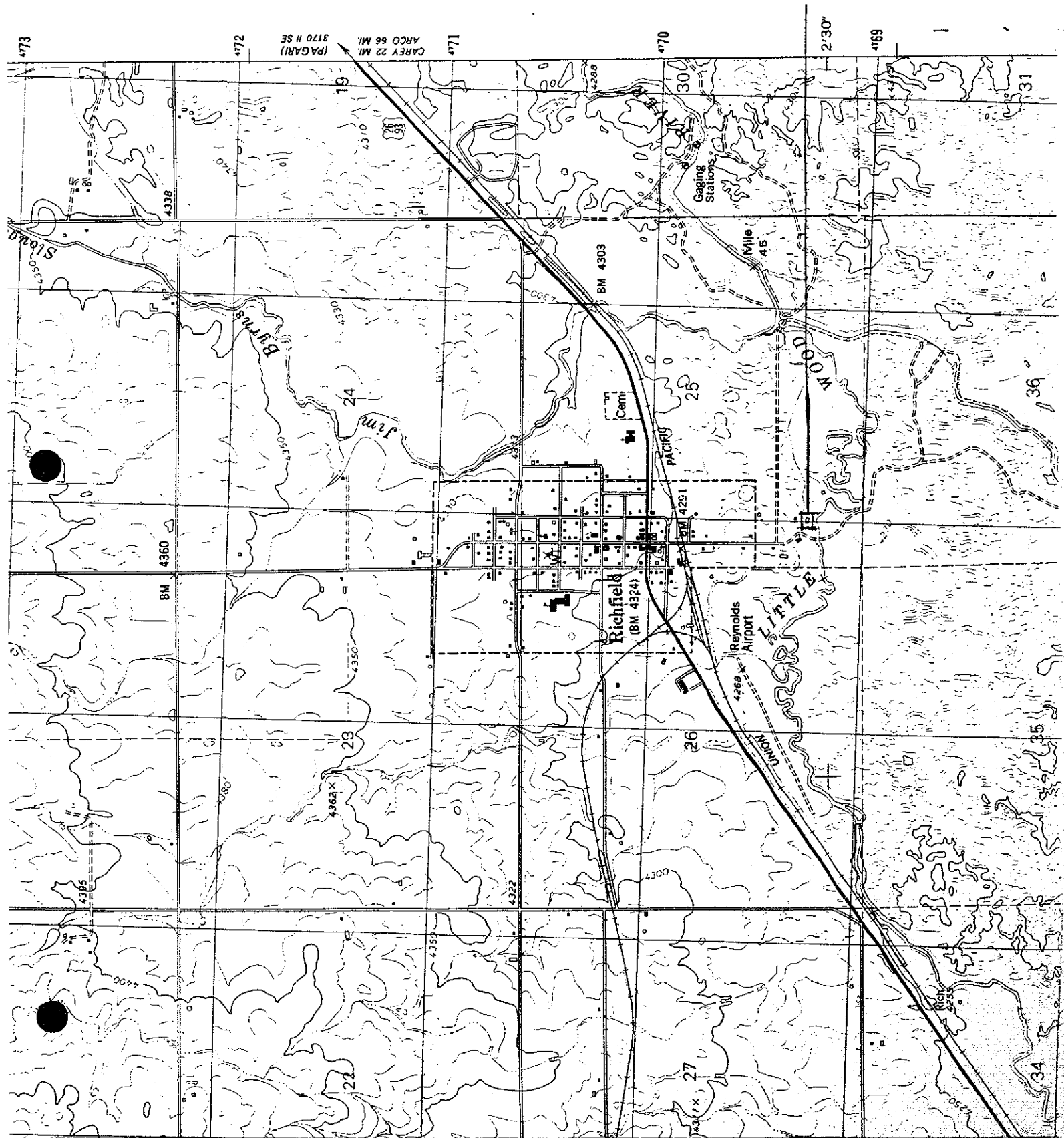
Historical Context:

The James H. Lane Ranch was one of many farms developed under the auspices of the Carey Act in Southern Idaho. Private development of Magic Reservoir on the Little and Big Wood Rivers brought irrigation to the Richfield area by 1910. Jennie Lane of New York owned property near Richfield, and eventually deeded half her property to her son, James H. Lane of Boise. Under the auspices of the Idaho Irrigation Company, settlers could borrow money to develop large-scale dairy operations. James Lane and J. R. McIntosh went into business together and started The Wood River Dairy in 1913. Between 1914 and 1918, a large dairy barn was erected on the Lane property. The barn, constructed of native basalt, has been attributed to Sandy Reed and Jack Oughton, local stone masons familiar with basalt construction. Lane also raised sheep and later cattle on the property.

Many farmers on marginal lands were initially successful, due to the high demand for U.S. agricultural products during World War I. Markets for sheep and other agricultural products collapsed after the war, causing a nationwide agricultural depression. The poor markets, along with several drought years, created an even larger hardship in Southern Idaho. The Idaho Irrigation Company failed to deliver all the water it had initially promised. James Lane, who had borrowed heavily during the war years, eventually lost most of his Richfield property during the 1920s, and had left the area by the 1930s. The history of Richfield and the James H. Lane Ranch exemplify the high expectations early private irrigation ventures created, and the subsequent realities of agricultural life on some Carey Act lands. The barn remains as a reminder of this initial optimism, and as an example of using native stone to construct substantial buildings.

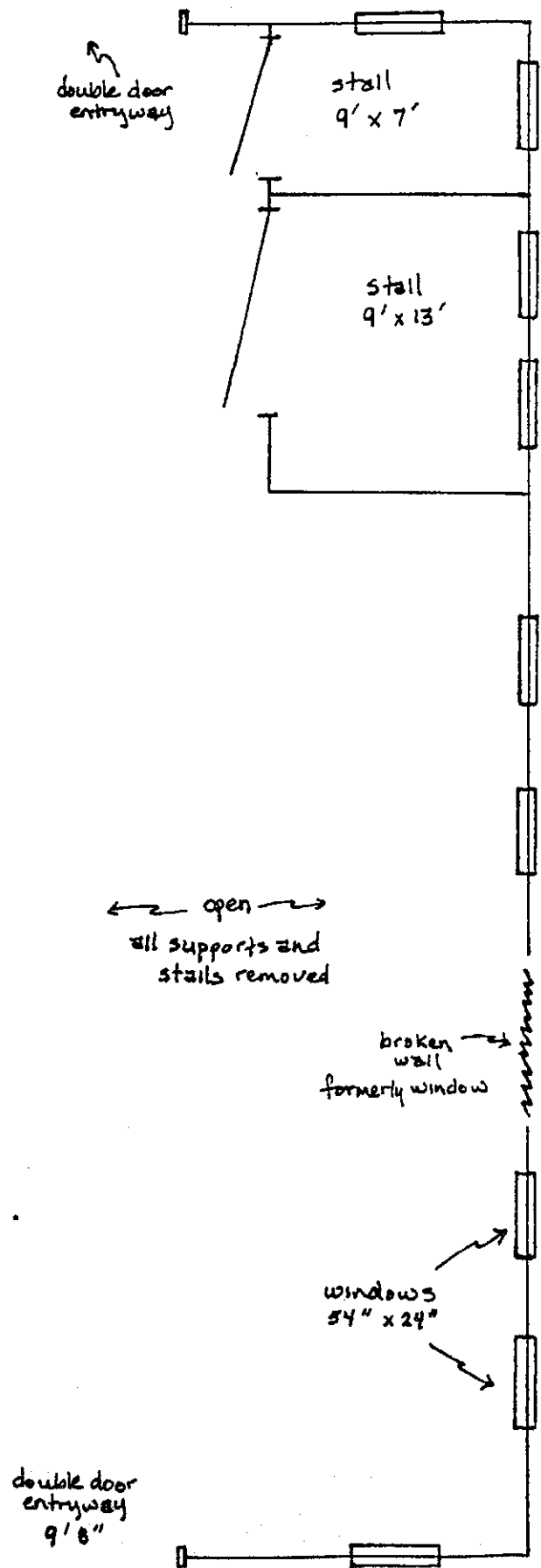
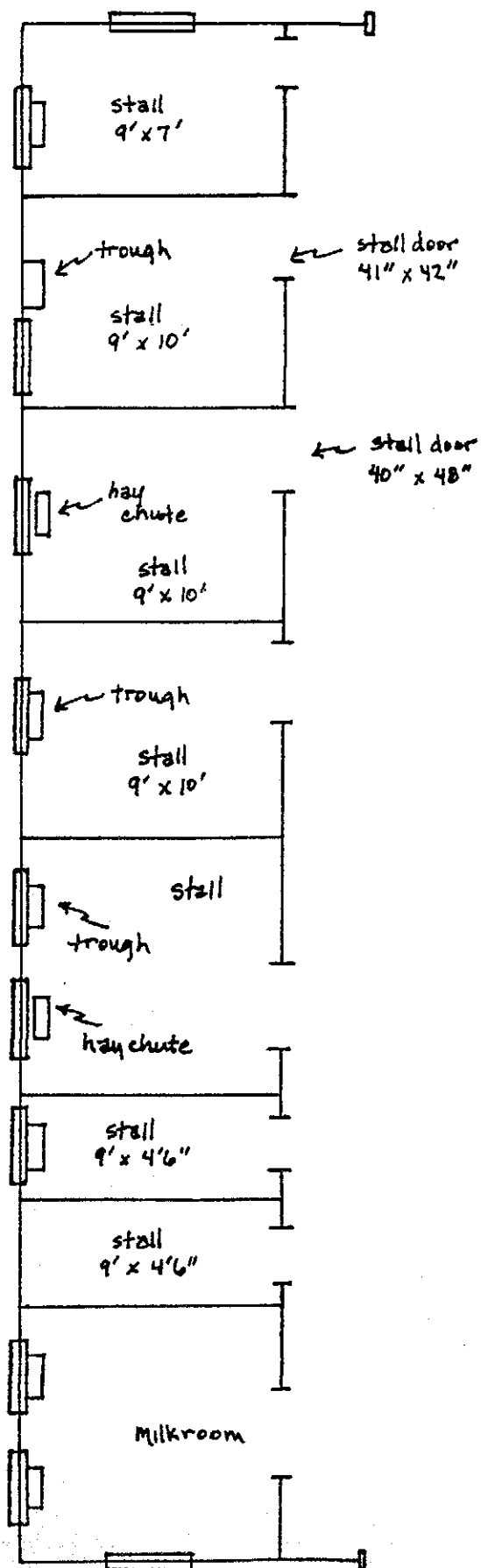
Sources: Refer to HABS Narrative Report, James H. Lane Ranch.

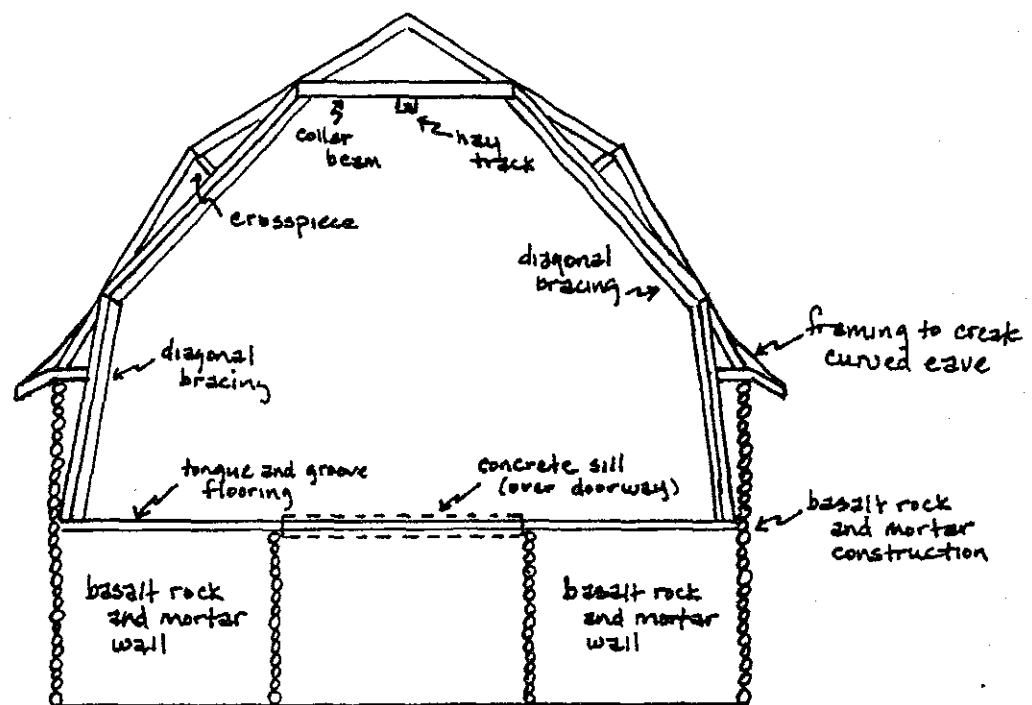
Project Information: Refer to HABS Narrative Report, James H. Lane Ranch.



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JAMES H. LANE RANCH, BARN
HABS No. ID-113-A (Page 5)





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